TIME AND HORSEMANSHIP IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

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If Milton scholars are no longer much inclined to enquire whether the Satan of *Paradise Lost* is hero or fool, Shakespeareans continue to explore an equally challenging theme: "Prince Hal: Hero or Hypocrite?" To match the variously "ironic" readings of such critics as Bradley, Van Doren, and Goddard, Dover Wilson, Charles Williams, and J. H. Walter have proposed interpretations essentially "heroic" in nature; while D. A. Traversi, noting the relevance of contemporary Elizabethan morality and "the austerity of a great religious tradition" to the abandonment of Falstaff, recognizes also that "Henry's judgments . . . suffer persistently from being too easily made," and observes that "there is no need . . . to be sentimental on behalf of either the Prince or Falstaff."[1] The purpose of this paper is, primarily, to draw attention to the particular use Prince Hal makes of his time, in the light especially of the various *misuses* of time made by others; and secondly, to show that Shakespeare's recurrent references to the horsemanship of various characters in the history plays throw light on their uses of time, or attitudes toward it. To speak generally, as each man rides, so he manages his span of time. The evidence to be brought forward lends support, I believe, to the view that Shakespeare's portrait of Henry V, as prince and king, was conceived not in an essentially ironic spirit (making every allowance for the force of Traversi's reservations), but to present a leader who "went to worke like a Conquerour"; even, in Walter's terms, "a leader of supreme genius bountifully assisted by Fortune."[2]

The importance of time in Shakespeare's history plays, of course, especially in *1, 2 Henry IV*, has been recognized by a number of critics, notably B. T. Spencer and Paul Jorgensen; while Peter Seng has recently observed, "In a sense it was not Hal who rejected Falstaff at all; it was Time."[3] That is surely correct. Time, as Spencer says, "is the frame of reference in which [*2 Henry IV*] is set"; the recognition of its central function, he shows, enables a reader or onlooker to perceive "the motives and pressures by which characters are moved, and also the complex of issues involved in the rejection scene." Well enough. But when Spencer asserts, further, that "the subject of *2 Henry IV* is man

against time," and that Hal is, "*like the other public figures of the play* . . . impelled toward a life of action and public achievement as the most valid human effort to *counteract* the power of time" [italics mine], the case is put in terms that do not, it seems, quite accurately represent the situation. Paul Jorgensen sees this: "The primary emphasis given to time in *Henry IV*," he observes, "is the problem of its redemption"; and he convincingly rejects the usual editorial reading of "redeeming time"[4] in favour of one that reflects contemporary religious literature: "To redeem (or 'rescue') time was to take full advantage of the time that one is given here on earth for salvation." Hal, by this view, does not oppose or attempt to counteract time; rather, he carefully adapts himself to it, he understands how it is to be used. It is in that sense that Exeter will remind the French sovereign, in *Henry V*:

> . . . he weighs time
> Even to the utmost grain. (II, iv, 137–8)[5]

Jorgensen, however (a little surprisingly), says of *1, 2 Henry IV*, "One might accept as the motto for the two plays the observation made by Hastings: 'We are Time's subjects, and Time bids begone'." If "motto" is used here to mean an indication of the central idea or symbolic meaning of the two plays, Jorgensen would seem to be saying that the *power* of time over men, rather than the *contest* between men and time, is the theme of *1, 2 Henry IV*. If, on the other hand, "motto" has the force merely of signification 3 in the O.E.D. ("A short quotation . . . prefixed to a literary work or to one of its parts, and expressing some idea appropriate to its contents"), one may respond that the passage, "We are Time's subjects, and Time bids begone," is in fact quite inappropriate to the centrally important Prince Hal (as this paper will suggest). Finally, it is Jorgensen's contention that, in the earlier histories, time is relatively unimportant: specifically in *Richard II*, "the concept of time remains external to the play and does no more than testify to the fact that it was beginning to engage the dramatist's mind." I think that these views do less than justice to the interplay of man and time in *1, 2 Henry IV*, as well as in *Richard II* and even in *Richard III*.

This is perhaps the proper place to enter two caveats. Although it may be possible to demonstrate that time and horses constitute an image-cluster in the plays of Shakespeare, the present essay is not concerned to argue that point. It is concerned with the extent to which references in the dialogue to horses and horsemanship bear on each character's use of time or his attitude toward time. Secondly, I am not supposing

Shakespeare to have had in mind, from the outset of *Richard III*, extending on through to the conclusion of *Henry V*, anything like a deliberately planned juxtaposition of man and time. But I think it is reasonable to suggest that as the playwright developed, in Prince Hal, his portrait of the "true kingly type," moving on to consider (with *Henry V*) the character of "an ideal reigning king,"[6] the disabling traits of lesser rulers should be thrown into high relief by the contrasting abilities and insights of the emergent Hal. In turn, his quality is demonstrated in part by the relative ineffectiveness of earlier rulers. And in this context, the sovereign's ability to *move in time*, and to grasp its nature—neither to oppose it nor submissively to be overmastered by it—is one of the most significant indices of his capacity to rule. A passage in the Epilogue to *Henry V* is so relevant that we might even risk calling it "the motto" for the trilogy which *Henry V* concludes. "Thus far," says the Chorus,

> with rough and all-unable pen,
> Our bending author hath pursu'd the story,
> In little room confining mighty men,
> Mangling by starts the full course of their glory.

Then, with subtly altered emphasis, the passage continues,

> Small time; but in that small most greatly lived
> This Star of England. (ll. 1–6)

A "true king" recognizes the futility of hoping to *counteract* time, but it does not follow that he merely serves the purposes of time; what matters is to live "most greatly" within one's allotted span: by knowledge and action, in fact, to redeem time. Other monarchs, and (in *1, 2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*) the companions and opponents of the true model Hal gradually is revealed to be, misuse time in various ways, according as each misunderstands the appropriate relationship of man and time.

Shakespeare's Richard III is, evidently, an evil man. But for our purposes, what chiefly matters is that in thought and deed he is intensely *active*. In the course of the play, however, his activity, at first carefully thought out and well-timed, grows steadily more directionless and haphazard, until at last Richard explicitly acknowledges his absolute submission to mere chance:

> . . . I have set my life upon a cast,
> And I will stand the hazard of the die. (V, iv, 9–10)

The movement from control to lack of it develops in three stages. In the first two Acts, and through the opening scenes of a third, a busy Richard,

who hates "the idle pleasures of these days," cheerfully sets about clearing the scene of active or potential opponents; before Act II is far advanced, the death of Edward IV seems to confirm Gloucester's confidence that God will play the role of divine conspirator:

> God take King Edward to his mercy,
> And leave the world for me to bustle in! (I, i, 151–2)

All the energetic planning is conducted, however, with thoughtful care; and Richard significantly observes, as his mind reaches hungrily on into the future, "But yet I run before my horse to market" (I, i, 160).[7] He knows, at this stage, that events must not be hurried; and his cool control is demonstrated by the fact that in Acts I and II he characteristically allows others to set traps for themselves, or, in the case of confederates like Buckingham, to suggest and even initiate action: ". . . my dear cousin, / I, as a child, will go by thy direction" (II, ii, 152–3). And as Act III opens, people are still appearing on cue: ". . . in good time, here comes the sweating lord"; ". . . in good time, here comes the Duke of York" (III, i, 24, 95). So far, Richard is "in tune" with time; it is constant to his purposes.

But just here a sinister change begins to make itself felt, and increasingly to influence Richard's conduct throughout the remainder of this Act and the next. At first this takes the form chiefly of impatience, of a desire to accelerate the course of events: even to force time's hand. With nervous eagerness, Richard presses first Catesby (III, i, 188), later Tyrrel (IV, ii, 83), in almost identical terms: "Shall we hear from thee . . . ere we sleep?" And a similar impatience prompts the brusque probing of Buckingham:

> Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead,
> And I would have it suddenly performed.
> What say'st thou now? Speak suddenly, be brief.
> (IV, ii, 18–20)

Shortly thereafter, these hints of a shifting viewpoint are confirmed by what amounts to a statement of policy, couched in extreme and violent terms:

> . . . I have learn'd that fearful commenting
> Is leaden servitor to dull delay;
> Delay leads impotent and snail-pac'd beggary.
> Then fiery expedition be my wing . . . .
> (IV, iii, 51–4)

And the implication, that thoughtless action is preferable to planning and premeditation (anticipated, perhaps, by the careless reply to Buckingham's question about Hastings, "Chop off his head! Something we will

determine"), is capped by those incoherent and confused exchanges with Catesby and Ratcliff in the fourth Act (iv, 440–56). It is also clear that, as Richard increasingly attempts to force and hurry events, his degree of control over them proportionately slackens: the excessively lengthy exchange with Queen Elizabeth and the uneasy interview with Lord Stanley lead only to ambiguities, while enemies continue to gather in Kent and Devon, and Richmond lands at Milford.

In Act V (whatever sympathy we may or may not feel for his despair and courage), Richard is clearly branded tyrant by his own words:

> For conscience is a word that cowards use,
> Devis'd at first to keep the strong in awe.
> Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law!
> (V, iii, 310–12)

In this Act too, the movement from considered action, as time serves, toward steadily more hurried and reckless action, in spite of time, is brought to a close, with a series of appropriate ironies. Richard is active as ever ("Come, bustle, bustle"), but no longer gay:

> I have not that alacrity of spirit
> Nor cheer of mind that I was wont to have. (ll. 73–4)

Time's movement is continually in his mind:

> Here will I lie tonight;
> But where to-morrow? (7–8)
>
> What is't o'clock? (47)
>
> It is not yet near day. (231)
>
> Tell the clock there. Give me a calendar. (277)

Yet, reminding others to be prompt ("Stir with the lark to-morrow, gentle Norfolk," "Bid [Stanley] bring his power before sunrising"), Richard is himself late to the field. Calm Richmond acts when it is time to act:

> RICHM. How far into the morning is it, lords?
> LORDS. Upon the stroke of four.
> RICHM. Why, then 'tis time to arm and give direction.

Richard wastes time (as the event makes clear) by skulking among his army's tents; Norfolk has to recall him: "Arm, arm, my lord! The foe vaunts in the field." And the man who once knew that there is a time for everything (one mustn't run before one's horse to market) finds himself quite unhorsed at last, with his second, the "Jockey of Norfolk," struck down as well. As Paul Fatout has written in another connection,

"The unskilful rider, too fond of the spur, and too forward in the chase, might find himself jaded out of the field."[8] That is really what has happened to Richard. Kings, presumably, should temper action with knowledge. To act unconsideringly, "out of time," so to speak, is to challenge time, and so to invite disaster: in this case, to be cut off from the "smiling plenty, and fair prosperous days" of "the time to come" (V, v, 33–4).

There are, of course, other roads to destruction. If Richard III is (or becomes) all action, Richard II is all inaction. When Bolingbroke is king, recalling his predecessor, he will employ a curious but apt term: "The skipping King, he *ambled* up and down" (*1 Henry IV*, III, ii, 60). In its context here, "ambled" presumably refers in the first instance to "a movement in dancing or walking . . . an artificial or acquired pace"; but, as the O.E.D. makes clear, the term in virtually all its meanings carries some suggestion of the mild-tempered "amblere" that typically moves "at an easy pace." We need not labour the irony implicit in the fact that inactive Richard's preferred mount was proud "roan Barbary." The important point to be noted is the close association (in V, v) of Richard's meditation on time and his reaction to the groom's news that Bolingbroke now rides Barbary. Since Richard has wasted his time, he is now wasted by time, to be sure. But there is more. "My time," Richard muses,

> Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy,
> While I stand fooling here, his Jack o' th' clock. (ll. 59–60)

Richard, in fact, has truly *lost* his time to Bolingbroke, who now possesses it, uses it for his own; in another figure, Bolingbroke rides the crest of time's wave. And it is through a similar image that Richard most piercingly feels his loss: roan Barbary, like the time that was Richard's but now "runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy," has passed into the rival's possession.[9] Like Richard III, then, although in a fashion somewhat different, Richard II finds himself "unhorsed" at the close of his career. For all his wit and insight, his knowledge of what is happening to him and what the course of time will bring about (notably in III, iii), he cannot *act*. Both men are "bad riders"; while each is knowledgeable enough, neither knows how to use the time allotted him, how to "keep time." And so both lose their time.

In the character of Henry IV, Shakespeare continues to illustrate this theme. But now the emphasis is no longer placed on action or inaction in time (or on right and wrong modes of action). Bolingbroke's distinguishing characteristic in this regard, in *Richard II* as well

as in *1, 2 Henry IV*, is his inability to understand time, his uneasiness in the midst of great events. His "disabling trait," then, is a defect of knowledge; he is often puzzled. The references, in *Richard II*, to his horsemanship are certainly not all of a piece; they are, nonetheless, appropriate and instructive. To the groom in Pomfret, Barbary "went . . . under [Bolingbroke] . . . So proudly as he had disdain'd the ground" (V, v, 83). This seems to echo York's description:

> Then, as I said, the Duke, great Bolingbroke,
> Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed,
> Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,
> With slow but stately pace kept on his course,
> Whilst all tongues cried, "God save thee, Bolingbroke!"
> (V, ii, 7–11)

On the other hand, Richard cries in Pomfret:

> I was not made a horse,
> And yet I bear a burthen like an ass,
> Spurr'd, gall'd, and tir'd by jauncing Bolingbroke.
> (V, v, 92–4)

Given the earlier passages, one might easily dismiss Richard's telling epithet as a reflection merely of his rage and anguish. But there is more to it than this. York retails, and the groom echoes, what Bolingbroke wants others to see. The politician knows all about the value of appearance; indeed, on a later occasion he will recommend its uses to Hal:

> I stole all courtesy from heaven,
> And dress'd myself in such humility
> That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
> Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths
> Even in the presence of the crowned King.
> Thus did I keep my presence fresh and new,
> My presence, like a robe pontifical,
> Ne'er seen but wond'red at; and so my state,
> Seldom but sumptuous, show'd like a feast
> And won by rareness such solemnity.
> (*1 Henry IV*, III, ii, 50–9)

The groom who visits Richard in Pomfret evidently has something above the common in him, but even he, after all, retains the impression that Bolingbroke seeks to leave with Londoners on coronation day. As for York, whose loyalty is given, not to the person of any single monarch, but to the Crown, he has already in the abdication scene committed himself to the new order; his description of Bolingbroke's

horsemanship is therefore hardly more than an appropriately decorative detail in an extended commentary keyed to the assertion of God's strong and mysterious purpose. "Heaven hath a hand in these events," he concludes,

> To whose high will we bound our calm contents.
> To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now,
> Whose state and honour I for aye allow. (V, ii, 37–40)

The populace cannot plumb Bolingbroke's character; York does not care to. Richard, however, has consistently grasped Bolingbroke's motives, if he has never been able to counter them. At the close of III, iii, and from his entrance in IV, i, Richard, thoroughly understanding the other man, all but assumes the role of a mocking stage director; while his prophecies to Northumberland, in V, i, accurately forecast the troubled future, with particular reference to Bolingbroke's uneasy reign:

> Thou shalt think,
> Though he divide the reign and give thee half,
> It is too little, helping him to all.
> And he shall think that thou, which know'st the way
> To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again,
> Being ne'er so little urg'd, another way,
> To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.
> (V, i, 59–65)

It is certainly a fact that, throughout *1, 2 Henry IV*, Bolingbroke's prevailing sense of insecurity is much in evidence, reflected now in irascible and arbitrary language, now in terms of doubt and vacillation.[10] In this context, to speak of "jauncing Bolingbroke" is to employ a particularly apt expression. T. E. Lawrence once wrote to a friend, "Things happen, and we do our best to keep in the saddle."[11] That very well describes Bolingbroke's position in these plays. He is in the saddle, but he is not one with his mount, which he handles roughly, as a vain (or perhaps an inexpert) rider will.[12] Bolingbroke "shows" like a king, but he lacks true kingly perception, first all but guided to the throne by Richard, later on passing from misconception to misconception, and on his deathbed still befooled.

Henry's bewildered view of time and man's use of it is revealed particularly in *1, 2 Henry IV*. He is continually trying to "make time" for that trip to the Holy Land; but "this same time's condition" (*2 Henry IV*, III, i, 78) as continually prevents him. One is reminded of Tolstoy's German generals in *War and Peace*, doggedly making complete and precise plans, and utterly routed at last by forces beyond reason's grasp.

More significantly, Henry presumes to assess his own place in time; and his assessment, accurate enough as it touches Hal, is at fault in its larger implications:

> God knows, my son,
> By what bypaths and indirect crook'd ways
> I met this crown; and I myself know well
> How troublesome it sat upon my head.
> To thee it shall descend with better quiet,
> Better opinion, better confirmation;
> For all the soil of the achievement goes
> With me into the earth. (*2 Henry IV*, IV, v, 184–91)

That he fails entirely to grasp the purposes informing Hal's conduct is clear. "The hope and expectation of thy time / Is ruin'd" was his judgment in *1 Henry IV*; but a later rebuke is more ironically revealing:

> Dost thou so hunger for mine empty chair
> That thou wilt needs invest thee with my honours
> Before thy hour be ripe? (*2 Henry IV*, IV, v, 95–7)

As prince or king, Hal regularly resists temptations to act before the time has come for action; he seems already to know what Hamlet and Edgar will have to learn. Finally, Henry IV deeply *fears* time: he indeed considers it to be an enemy that will inevitably cancel and confound all the labours of men.

> O God, that one might read the book of fate,
> And see the revolution of the times
> Make mountains level, and the continent,
> Weary of solid firmness, melt itself
> Into the sea! and other times to see
> The beachy girdle of the ocean
> Too wide for Neptune's hips; how chances mock,
> And changes fill the cup of alteration
> With divers liquors! O, if this were seen,
> The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,
> What perils past, what crosses to ensue,
> Would shut the book and sit him down and die.
> (*2 Henry IV*, III, i, 45–56)

Misreading and fearing time as he does, Henry IV can only be a king of shreds and patches, a caretaker, holding the crown in fee until his son, royal Hal, assumes sovereign power.

These rulers, all less than kingly in their different ways, but especially in their use or view of time, point on to Hal as the true prince and king. And other figures too, not for the most part royal, but opponents or companions of the prince, by their speeches and actions illuminate this

theme. Hotspur, as Jorgensen well says, is "driven by a passionate time-consciousness." And Hotspur is sure he knows what time is for: he says to the plotters,

> . . . yet time serves wherein you may redeem
> Your banish'd honours, and restore yourselves
> Into the good thoughts of the world again . . . .
> (*1 Henry IV*, I, iii, 180–2)

What matters is to "pluck . . . honor" from sky or sea,

> So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
> Without corrival all her dignities . . . . (206–7)

And since "the time of life is short,"

> To spend that shortness basely were too long
> If life did ride upon a dial's point,
> Still ending at the arrival of an hour. (V, ii, 82–4)

Therefore, "let the hours be short," he cries at the end of Act I, "Till fields and blows and groans applaud our sport!" Dash, and action at high speed in an honourable cause, may enable man to salvage something at least, in a sense to "defeat" time, even if it is true that

> . . . thoughts the slave of life, and life time's fool,
> And time, that takes survey of all the world,
> Must have a stop. (V, iv, 81–3)

Hotspur is of course a strongly appealing figure; but his view of time is mistaken, and Shakespeare takes care to show this in more than one way. Hal's well-known comment,

> I'll so offend to make offence a skill,
> Redeeming time when men least think I will,
> (*1 Henry IV*, I, ii, 240–1)

is one answer to Hotspur: better than redeeming honour *in* time (implying encompassment and limitation by time) is the redemption of time itself.

Beyond this, however, there is the matter of Hotspur's horsemanship. No one would question his mastery of the art, I imagine, but it is also a curious fact that horses and horsemanship are almost an obsession with him. Interestingly enough, given his view of time, he finds Glendower "as tedious / As a tired horse" (III, i, 159–60). His wife can scarcely distract him when horses are in question: "That roan shall be my throne," he muses, and while we do not doubt his love for Lady Percy, this love can be fully expressed only when Hotspur is in the saddle:

> . . . when I am a-horseback, I will swear
> I love thee infinitely. (II, iii, 104–5)

Not much unlike Pugliano, in Sidney's *Apologie*, Hotspur all but identifies himself with his horse: "Come, let me *taste* my horse," he cries,

> Who is to bear me like a thunderbolt
> Against the bosom of the Prince of Wales.
> Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse,
> Meet, and ne'er part till one drop down a corse.
> (IV, i, 119–23)

The key to all this is the brief exchange with Lady Percy.

> LADY P. What is it carries you away?
> HOTS. Why, my horse, my love—my horse!
> (II, iii, 78–9)

The tone seems light-hearted enough; still, she is not to question, "nor reason whereabout. / Whither I must, I must" (107–8). In these passages, we are allowed to glimpse the rash thoughtlessness that deeply undercuts Hotspur's pursuit of honour; and to recognize also the headlong, uncontrolled nature of his way of life, his use of time. He is, rather like the man that Richard III becomes, excessively committed to action. As the horse (his "love," perhaps) that carries him away, in a sense overmasters him, so time is not being used by Hotspur; it is using him up.

If Hotspur rushes at time, Falstaff regularly evades it. The career of the one is all direct challenge; of the other, witty circumvention. In the end, neither extreme will serve. Again, horsemanship or the lack of it is linked to a character's use of time. As a matter of fact, we hear very little of Falstaff as rider, reasonably enough: the well-known passage runs, "Falstaff sweats to death / And lards the lean earth as he *walks* along" (*1 Henry IV*, II, ii, 115–16).[18] Doubtless one ought not to make too much of the action at Gadshill, although it is probably worth noting that on that occasion Falstaff's appeal to Hal, "I prithee, good Prince Hal, help me to my horse, good king's son," meets with a sharp rebuke. But the fat knight's language and actions toward the end of *2 Henry IV*, just prior to the final rejection scene, are surely relevant here.

> Master Shallow, my Lord Shallow, be what thou wilt, I am Fortune's steward. Get on thy boots; we'll ride all night . . . . Boot, boot, Master Shallow! I know the young King is sick for me. Let us take any man's horses; the laws of England are at my commandment. (V, iii, 135–43)

And then later, in "the public place near Westminster Abbey":

FAL. It shows my earnestness of affection—
SHAL. It doth so.
FAL. My devotion—
SHAL. It doth, it doth, it doth.
FAL. As it were, to ride day and night; and not to deliberate, not to remember, not to have patience to shift me—
SHAL. It is best, certain.
FAL. But to stand stained with travel and sweating with desire to see him, thinking of nothing else, putting all affairs else in oblivion, as if there were nothing else to be done but to see him. (V, v, 17–29)

Falstaff, as these passages indicate, veers wildly from one extreme to the other. Having "stayed too long" (all his life) in his evasions of time, he hopes now to make up for everything, to make all even, by one wild night's ride—on "any man's horses." His desperate hope is to catch up with time. He is, of course, as irresponsible and shifty as ever; and even his pretences are immoderate. Then too (recalling Richard III, who turned frantically at last to luck and "the hazard of the die"), Falstaff imagines himself to be "Fortune's steward." But the only characters in Shakespeare's plays who are truly fortunate are those who first work for it, "make their luck"—which then (though not in every case, to be sure) augments of itself.

Finally, the Dauphin and his lords of France (perhaps with the exception of the Constable) are, in *Henry V*, drawn into the pattern too. Two scenes are pertinent. In III, vii, these figures talk primarily of two matters: horses and time. And their talk of both is essentially *dis*orderly in character. That his mount should be termed merely (and accurately) "a most absolute and excellent horse," is not to be endured by the Dauphin, who employs language of ever more fanciful extravagance:

He trots the air. The earth sings when he touches it . . . . he is pure air and fire . . . . His neigh is like the bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforces homage . . . . 'Tis a subject for a sovereign to reason on, and for a sovereign's sovereign to ride on; and for the world, familiar to us and unknown, to lay apart their particular functions and wonder at him. (ll. 17–41)

And the Dauphin concludes, "My horse is my mistress." Together with expressions such as these, the scene is punctuated by eager longings for the dawn. None of the group can quite endure the deliberate passage of time: "Would it were day!" "Will it never be morning?" "What a

long night is this!" "Will it never be day?" Also, a little ominously, these figures cannot bring themselves to wait until four: they arm too soon. "'Tis midnight; I'll go arm myself," says the Dauphin; that was to be expected, but even the relatively sober Constable is over-eager, leading the others to the armorers' at "two o'clock." They cannot abide time's proper pace, but must rush at it. The Constable says of the Dauphin, "Doing is activity, and he will still be doing," but the comment is in some sense applicable to all of these impatient men. One is reminded of bustling Richard III, who says on the eve of Bosworth, "To-morrow is a *busy* day"; Richmond notices rather that the setting sun "gives token of a *goodly* day to-morrow" (V, iii, 18–21). Even before the downfall of the French in battle, it is made clear (in IV, ii) that, like Richard III again, for all their excessive eagerness, they are behind-hand when the crucial moment arrives. "The English are embattail'd, you French peers," a messenger warns them, in the midst of their renewed exclamations about the quality of their horses; and a moment later they are again rebuked, this time by Grandpré: "Why do you stay so long, my lords of France?" When they have met disaster, their last word (it is given to Bourbon) might have been Hotspur's:

> The devil take order now! I'll to the throng.
> Let life be short; else shame will be too long.
>
> (IV, v, 22–3)

Here then are a great variety of ways in which men mishandle time, or fail to understand its use: all illustrated, in word or deed, with reference to horses and horsemanship. Some figures are over-hasty, too anxious to anticipate their cue for action on a greater stage: these are the fiery riders, the drivers. Hotspur, Richard III, and in some degree the French lords exemplify the type. They are all violently destroyed. Richard II and Falstaff are too slothful and evasive: they are also "destroyed," no doubt, but it is more accurate to say that time flows past them, leaves them behind. "Jauncing Bolingbroke" is a special case: he retains his position, but he is characteristically uneasy, uncertain. Time tolerates him, but it also permits him to reveal his shortcomings by his unwise estimates of present and future events.

Prince Hal, in one way or another, is set over against all these men; and chiefly in that he, and he alone, understands how to use his time. "He doth both act and know." He understands that only by in some measure adjusting oneself to the movement of events—while never altogether giving way to them—may one at length act meaningfully in time. Time is neither an opponent nor a tyrannical master to the man

who can wait, watch, and measure, until it is time to act in an appropriate fashion. The response to his father's accusation of negligence combines confidence (that his time will come) with restraint (curbing any impulse to hurry events onward):

> I will redeem all this on Percy's head,
> And, in the closing of some glorious day
> Be bold to tell you that I am your son
> When I will wear a garment all of blood,
> And stain my favours in a bloody mask
> Which, wash'd away, shall scour my shame with it.
> And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,
> That this same child of honour and renown,
> This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,
> And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet.
> For every honour sitting on his helm,
> Would they were multitudes, and on my head
> My shame redoubled! For the time will come
> That I shall make this Northern youth exchange
> His glorious deeds for my indignities . . . .
> This in the name of God I promise here . . . .
> (*1 Henry IV*, III, ii, 132–146, 153)

When Hal doubts, he doubts *himself*, not the time that contains him: "Well, thus we play the fools with the time, and the spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock us" (2 *Henry IV*, II, ii, 155–6). That he continually seeks to make use even of time passed foolishly, however, is made clear by his comment at the close of this scene: ". . . in everything the purpose must weigh with the folly."

Richard III, early in his career, had thought of Heaven almost as of a rival power, which might be propitiated (or cozened) in order that men might proceed with their own schemes, and wrest time to their purposes:

> Simple, plain Clarence! I do love thee so
> That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven
> If heaven will take the present at our hands. (I, i, 118–20)

> God take King Edward to his mercy,
> And leave the world for me to bustle in! (I, i, 151–2)

Henry V speaks of divine mercy too, but in quite a different context. The responsibility of a true king, in the span of time allotted to him, centers on the maintenance of law and order in the state, and on the meting out of justice there; mercy is the concern of God. Here is Henry passing sentence on Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey:

God quit you in his mercy! . . .
Touching our person, seek we no revenge,
But we our kingdom's safety must so tender,
Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws
We do deliver you. Get you therefore hence,
(Poor miserable wretches) to your death;
The taste whereof God of his mercy give
You patience to endure, and true repentance
Of all your dear offences! (*Henry V*, II, ii, 166, 174–81)

For the rest, he realizes that not even the true king can penetrate, far less anticipate, the inscrutable purpose of God; he can only plead for divine forbearance.

Not to-day, O Lord,
O, not to-day, think not upon the fault
My father made in compassing the crown!
I Richard's body have interred new;
And on it have bestowed more contrite tears
Than from it issued forced drops of blood.
. . . . More will I do!
Though all that I can do is nothing worth,
Since that my penitence comes after all,
Imploring pardon. (*Henry V*, IV, i, 309–14, 319–22)

God and man together, then, combine to make the best use of time, which properly serves both.

The rejection of Falstaff is the act not merely of a man but of a king acting in the sight of God. *Not* to have rejected Falstaff would have been to try to hold time back, to oppose oneself to it. Henry IV was terrified by change, but Henry V knows how to adjust to its demands, emerging in his full and constant being (like Edgar in *King Lear*) only when the proper moment arrives. Accordingly,

Presume not that I am the thing I was;
For God doth know (so shall the world perceive)
That I have turn'd away my former self;
So will I those that kept me company.
(2 *Henry IV*, V, v, 60–3)

Warwick had said it all, in the Jerusalem Chamber:

The Prince but studies his companions
Like a strange tongue, wherein, to gain the language,
'Tis needful that the most immodest word
Be look'd upon and learnt; which once attain'd,
Your Highness knows, comes to no further use
But to be known and hated. So, like gross terms,
The Prince will in the perfectness of time

Cast off his followers; and their memory
Shall as a pattern or a measure live,
By which his Grace must mete the lives of others,
Turning past evils to advantages.

(*2 Henry IV*, IV, iv, 68–78)

And even before Shrewsbury, Vernon had seen that vision of Hal on horseback, the archetypal rider:

I saw young Harry with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,
Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat
As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

(*1 Henry IV*, IV, i, 104–10)

In Henry V as prince and king, therefore, Shakespeare presents the "Star of England," whose allotted span of time was small enough, but who "in that small, most greatly lived." Against the muddled thought and action of these other figures considered here, his comprehension and use of time stick fiery off indeed. And it is surely no accident that the Chorus introducing *Henry V* should, having conjured up a vision of "the warlike Harry, like himself," couch an appeal to the audience in terms of horsemanship and time:

Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth.
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hourglass . . . . (ll, 26–31)

For just such terms were appropriate to introduce the play in which the consummate rider who had emerged "in the perfectness of time" at last moved to the centre of Shakespeare's stage.[14]

NOTES

1 See A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (London, 1959), 256–7; Mark Van Doren, *Shakespeare* (New York, 1941), 176; H. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1951), 162; *1 Henry IV*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1946), xiii; Charles Williams, *Shakespeare Criticism, 1919–35*, ed. A. Bradby (Oxford, 1936), 188; *Henry V*, ed. J. H. Walter (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), xxii; D. A. Traversi, *An Approach to Shakespeare* (New York, 1956), 34–35. See also Traversi's comment on *Henry V*: "Inheriting from his sources a conception of Henry as the victorious king, perfectly aware of his responsibilities and

religiously devoted to the idea of duty, Shakespeare emphasizes the difficulties of the conception, the obstacles, both personal and political, which lie between it and fulfilment" (42–3).

2 J. H. Walter, *ed. cit.*, xxiii.

3 Benjamin T. Spencer, "2 *Henry IV* and the Theme of Time," *UTQ*, XIII (1944), 394–9; Paul Jorgensen, " 'Redeeming Time' in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*," *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, V (1960), 101–109; Peter Seng, "Songs, Time, and the Rejection of Falstaff," *Shakespeare Survey*, XV (1962), 31–40. Quotations from Spencer and Jorgensen refer to the articles cited here.

4 For example, Dover Wilson's "making up for time misspent," or G. B. Harrison's "making up for the time I have lost."

5 Quotations from Shakespeare's plays in the text of this article refer to *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. G. L. Kittredge (Boston, 1936).

6 The terms are those of E. M. W. Tillyard in *Shakespeare's History Plays* (New York, 1946), 315.

7 Richard's scornfully ironic assessment of his position (made in the opening soliloquy) is revealing: "Instead of mounting barbèd steeds/To fright the souls of fearful adversaries," he finds himself lamely unhorsed, and undelighted, "in this weak piping time of peace" (I, i, 10–11, 24–5). Yet before the Act ends, as he gains control of events, post-horse and pack-horse appear in his speech (i, 145; iii, 122); and the line, "But yet I run before my horse to market," is apt enough, hinting at Richard's imaginative resumption of his role as a "man on horseback." V, iv, certainly, gains in dramatic force to the degree that one recalls these lines at the beginning of the play.

8 Paul Fatout, "Roan Barbary," *SAB*, XV (1940), 67–74.

9 Peter Ure, in his edition of the play (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), reads V, v, 58–9, to mean: " 'But my time, the time of Richard II, now hastens on in the proud joyful time of Bolingbroke'—like a traveller who has moved into a fresh landscape." This reading, however, obscures the force of Bolingbroke's *seizure* of the time that was Richard's, a force to be emphasized by the lines about Barbary that soon follow. Bolingbroke wrests away and makes his own both Richard's time and Richard's horse.

10 Cf. in particular, *1 Henry IV*, I, iii, 77–92, 113–24; V, i, 72–82; and *2 Henry IV*, III, i.

11 *The Letters of T. E. Lawrence*, ed. David Garnett (New York, 1939), 692.

12 Again, Ure's note (*ed. cit.*) invites comment: "jauncing" he reads to mean "moving up and down with the horse's motion"; and he finds "no reason to suppose with O.E.D. that the verb is transitive here." But "Spurr'd, gall'd, and tir'd" surely provides sufficient ground for just such a supposition. Even if that reading were to be rejected, the context at the least suggests an unhandy rider, not one who easily moves "*with* the horse's motion."

13 See also *1 Henry IV*, III, iii, 209–10.

14 Harold E. Toliver, in an essay printed since the present article was accepted for publication, deals in a larger context with some issues discussed here, notably the views of time held by Falstaff, Hotspur, and Hal. See "Falstaff, the Prince, and the History Play," *SQ*, XVI (1965), 63–80.